

Message Text

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USMISSION NATO

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AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 14518

E. O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR, US, UR

SUBJECT: POLISH EMIGRE SEES CONTINUING BREZHNEV WEAKNESSES

1. IN TALK WITH EMBOFF MAY 22, HENYRK BIRECKI, FORMER POLISH
PERN REP TO UN (1951-56) AND MEMBER OF POLISH FOREIGN MINISTRY
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE WHO EMIGRATED TO FRANCE IN 1968, EXPRESSED
CONCERN OVER RECENT " WESTERN PRESS BUILD- UP OF BREZHNEV."
HE THOUGHT THAT IN WELCOMING BREZHNEV TO WASHINGTON, USG
SHOULD KEEP INN MIND SIGNIFICANT CONTINUING RESISTANCE
TO BREZHNEV' S LEADERSHIP BY SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF CPSU CENTRAL
COMMITTEE MEMBERS. HEBELEIVED " PROOF" OF BREZHNEV' S LACK OF
SUPREME CONTROL OVER PARTY WAS " TEMPORARY" CHARACTER OF POLIT-
BURO TO EMERGE FROM RECENT RESHUFFLE. BREZHNEV HAD SUCCEDED
IN WEAKENING POSITIONS OF INDIVIDUAL CONSERVATIVE OPPONENTS
AT TOP OF CPSU BUT, IN BIRECKI' S VIEW HAD FAILED TO RALLY
AROUND HIMSELF PARTY LEADERS WITH POLITICAL FOLLOWINGS OF
THEIR OWN. INSTEAD, BREZHNEV HAD TO SETTLE FOR ANDROPOV,
GROMYKO, GRECHKO, AND COMPANY -- WHOM BIRECKI CONSIDERED
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VIRTUALLY DEVOID OF POWER BASES IN THEIR OWN RIGHT.

2. BIRECKI SEES DICHOTOMY IN CENTRAL COMMITTEE BETWEEN "BREZHNEV'S SMALL, BUT INCREASING, GROUP OF SUPPORTERS" AND AN ENTRENCHED "SILENT MAJORITY" WORRIED OVER POTENTIAL UNDERMINING OF PARTY'S AUTHORITY THROUGH INCREASING SOVIET CONTACTS WITH WEST. HE BELIEVES BREZHNEV GENERALLY GETTING HIS WAY IN CONTINUING DETENTE EFFORTS AT SUMMIT, BUT THINKS CENTRAL COMMITTEE CONSERVATIVES HAVE VIRTUAL CARTE BLANCHE TO TIGHTEN PARTY CONTROLS OVER INTERNAL DISSIDENTS AND KEEP SHARP EYE ON GROWING CONTACTS WITH NON-COMMUNIST WORLD -- ESPECIALLY AFTER CSCE.

3. BIRECKI SAID THAT WHILE IN WARSAW HE HAD OCCASIONALLY MET GROMYKO, WHO HAD BEEN "WANTING TO RETIRE AT LEAST SINCE LATE 1960'S." HE FORESEES RELATIVELY EARLY NAMING OF NEW SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTER, DOUBTS BREZHNEV ADVISOR ALEXANDROV WOULD WANT THE POSITION "BECAUSE HE HAS TOO MANY ENEMIES" IN STATE BUREAUCRACY, BUT SPECULATES THAT ONE LOGICAL CANDIDATE FOR THE JOB MIGHT BE FORMER AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE ABRASIMOV.

4. ACROSS THIS BACKDROP OF "UNSTABLE" SOVIET LEADERSHIP SITUATION AND IN LIGHT OF ENORMOUS USSR ECONOMIC NEEDS, WHICH BREZHNEV WISHES TO MEET IN LARGE PART THROUGH TIES WITH WEST, BIRECKI HOPES WASHINGTON WILL BRAGAIN HARD WITH SOVIETS DURING BREZHNEV VISIT TO US. BIRECKI STRONGLY SUPPORTS CONTINUING US EFFORT TO BUILD RELATIONS WITH BREZHNEV, WHILE REMAINING AWARE OF LATTER'S WEAKNESSES. AT AGE 67, BREZHNEV WILL PROBABLY HAVE ONLY LIMITED TIME AT HELM OF CPSU IN ANY CASE -- "PERHAPS ONLY TWO OR THREE YEARS," IN BIRECKI'S OPINION.

5. COMMENT: HAVING SPENT OVER FOUR YEARS IN FRANCE, BIRECKI MAY BE LOSING TOUCH WITH SOVIET DEVELOPMENTS. HOWEVER, IN VIEW OF HIS POLISH MFA EXPERIENCE, WHICH HE CLAIMS INCLUDED RECURRENT CONTACTS WITH GROMYKO, ALEXANDROV, ABRASIMOV, AND OTHER KEY SOVIET DIPLOMATS, WE BELIEVE HIS VIEWS MAY BE OF INTEREST TO ADDRESSEE POSTS.
IRWIN

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